

Cassies 2004 Cases

Brand: Worldwide Short Film Festival

Winner: Sustained Success—Silver

Client Credits: Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival

Shane Smith, Festival Director
Gina Brown, Former Marketing Director
Ritsa Koutsouvanos, Marketing Manager

Agency Credits: TAXI

Zak Mroueh, Creative Director
Alan Madill, Art Director
Terry Drummond, Writer
Rose Sauquillo, Art Director
Jane Murray, Writer
Lance Martin, Associate Creative Director
Jonathan Careless, Writer
Ron Smrczek, Art Director
Kira Procter, Writer
Dave Douglass, Art Director
Peter Breton, Writer
Louise Blouin, Producer
Sam Benson, Producer
Amanda Gaspard, Account Manager
Jill Balcerzak, Account Manager
Mark Prole, Print Producer

Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been extracting these lessons (he calls them Crossover Notes) since Cassies 1997. The notes for this case are as follows, and are attached. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

- Crossover Note 33.** Changing the Target Audience.
- Crossover Note 26.** Awareness Alone.
- Crossover Note 12.** Changing the Goalposts.
- Crossover Note 1.** What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 17.** Turning a liability into a strength.
- Crossover Note 18.** Keeping it Simple.
- Crossover Note 14.** Refreshing a continuing campaign.
- Crossover Note 5.** The Total Brand Experience.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

Executive Summary

Results Period: May 2000 – May 2004.

Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: May 2000.

Base Period: Historical comparisons.

Toronto and film festivals go hand in hand. The Toronto International Film Festival is the second largest film festival in the world and has a budget to match. Limos, lattes and people from La La land are a part of the Toronto scene every Fall. The festival culture is so established in this city that it's actually considered mainstream. Could there be a more conducive environment for a film festival? As a filmmaker—what more could you ask? The answer depends on what kind of filmmaker you are.

Toronto's favourite movie is the full-length feature. The two-hour flick is entrenched in our psyche. If you create big Hollywood features, Toronto is a great place for you. If you are an up and coming documentary maker, Toronto is a great place for you. If, on the other hand, you want to create miniature masterpieces that are over in less time than it takes to get a pizza delivered, then everything that makes Toronto a good market for most films starts to work against you.

This is a five year case showing how, despite these odds, the Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival has become a giant success. Five successive annual campaigns have steadily increased profile and interest for the Festival. This in turn has generated spectacular results in what matters most to the organizers: attendance, and entries from filmmakers.

Situation Analysis

a) Overall Assessment

For a small festival, the challenges were big. They fall into four categories.

1. Awareness.

With fewer than 4000 people at the 2000 screening, it's safe to say more people know about quantum physics than knew about the Festival. Finding a seat was never a problem.

2. Attitudes About Movies

Initially, most of the attendees were people in the film community—mostly directors, producers, and film students. While they were very appreciative of the films, they simply weren't enough of a customer base to give the Festival a healthy long-term outlook. It was essential to bring a more mainstream audience into the theatre. **Crossover Note 33.**

3. *Money. Or More Accurately, the Lack of It.*

The WSFF has always been monetarily challenged. Its operating budget is \$400,000, with only \$25,000 available for advertising. Growth was not going to come from spending; it needed to stem from creativity and the impact it generated.¹

4. *Competition*

We had to connect with an entertainment-oriented audience. (If you haven't seen a movie in the last year, a short film isn't likely to get you off the couch.) This affinity for entertainment, however, was also a challenge, because Toronto has endless options. Not only did we need to change the audience's mind about short films ([Crossover Note 26](#)) we had to compete with other movies, baseball, hockey, basketball, concerts, theatre and so on. With a one-week run in June the Festival has a short window of opportunity, smack-dab in the middle of entertainment season.

b) Objectives

To fulfill its mandate (and attract sponsorship and government funding), the Festival needs popular appeal. There is a strong focus on the quality and diversity of films, but it's the box office that finally matters. Hollywood lives and dies by it, as does the WSFF. So the list of objective of each successive advertising campaign has been very short:

- Increase audience attendance
- Increase the number of filmmakers who submit and screen work.

(Increased attendance also helps increase submissions, of course. Filmmakers are business people too, and are interested in having their work screened where it will be seen.)

Strategy & Insight

Most movie viewers evaluate films on the basis of what is familiar to them. They understand stories that take an hour and a half to unfold. They understand big production values. They understand stars and special effects. Conversely, average movie fans really don't know how to respond to a 14-minute film where (they perceive) not much happens, none of the actors are recognizable, and the production technique is something they've never seen before.

It's human nature to relate to the things we know. So we reasoned that the strategic and creative task was to establish (in a tongue in cheek way. [Crossover Note 12.](#)) that short films are *just like their longer counterparts*—but with enough difference to make them interesting. To do this, we had to show that short films fulfill the same conventions as longer ones, albeit in their own way. [Crossover Note 1.](#) For example, based on movie norms, people believe:

- That *plot* takes time.
- That *character* needs to unfold gradually.
- That *special effects* are big and spectacular.
- That movies need *a beginning, middle and end.*

¹ See the comment about the amount of PSA advertising as the final point of the case.

Against this, we wanted to demonstrate that:

- Just because short films are short, it doesn't mean they can't contain a plot. A lot can happen in a short amount of time.
- Character can be developed & demonstrated in a single moment. An unusual choice of words or actions can quickly illuminate a person's inner reality.
- Special effects can be low tech and high impact. They don't have to involve computer graphics and wizardry.
- A single scene can telegraph a much larger story—speaking volumes about what went on prior to that moment, and what might follow afterwards.

This would take considerable creativity (given that some of the “similarities” are a bit of a stretch) but it made sense to show movie fans that short films have just what they look for in long ones. [Crossover Notes 17 and 18](#).

An additional feature was a lighthearted stab at Hollywood and its pretensions. This appeals to all of us that question the overblown drama of the movie business (“The greatest love story of all time!”; “The biggest struggle ever endured!”; “The funniest thing you’ll ever see!”).

Execution

In Year 1 (2000) TV/cinema was itself a short film. In 30 seconds it established mood, setting, tension, and two characters who set up the “Miles from Hollywood” signature line. Print and outdoor showed that short films do what long films do, only faster.

In Year 2 (2001) we worked off the fact that short films take far less time. TV and print showcased a collection of characters in the midst of time sensitive activities. If these people had time to take in a short film, then anyone could.

In Year 3 (2002) dramatic and iconic film footage took 10 seconds to capture a famous, real-world story. Print took a more lighthearted approach, but also communicated that it doesn't take a lot of time to tell a story.

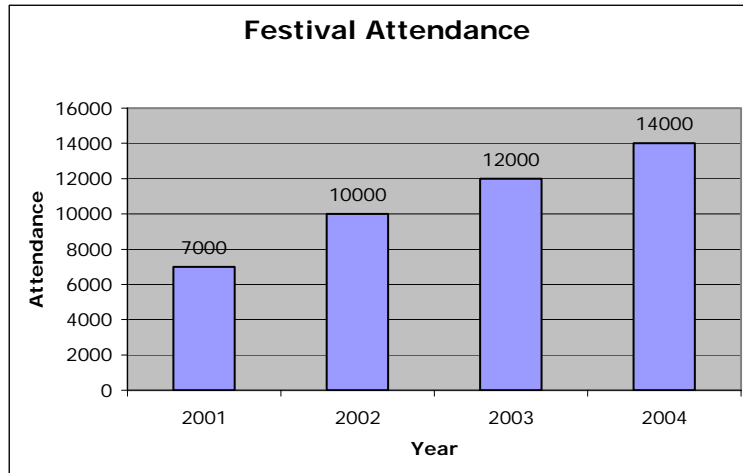
In Year 4 (2003) we took a poke at long films, through a character named Long, and quickly see that Long is bad and short is good. TV/cinema had the moody manner of non-Hollywood movies, while print was more graphic.

In Year 5 (2004) TV/cinema took us into the Festival and filmmaking world, with a peek at the tricks of the short film trade. Print had fun with other aspects – production schedules, critics' reviews and film scores.

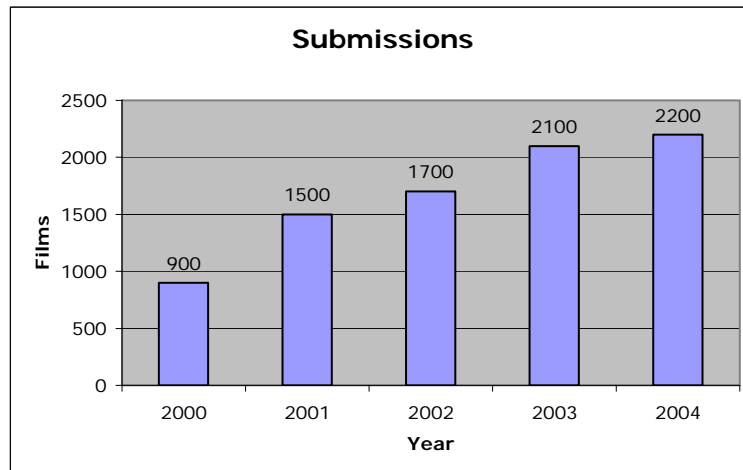
The campaigns have been different each year, but with a consistent character. Irreverent and witty, they have become part of the movie experience in Toronto. This year, movie watchers have been overheard telling their friends to sit down and be quiet because the Short Film Festival ads were starting—a distinction usually reserved for the feature film. [Crossover Note 14](#).

Business Results

The campaigns have produced exactly the effect the Festival wanted. In the time that the ads have run, Festival attendance has increased dramatically, as can be seen in the chart. The 2000 audience was less than 4,000—meaning that by 2004, attendance had increased 3 ½ fold.



There are similar results on the submissions front. The campaigns have been shown at other short film festivals to make filmmakers aware of the Worldwide Short Film Festival. The quality of the creative always creates an impact. Submissions have more than doubled since 2000.



In addition, the campaigns have won many international creative awards. This includes Cannes, the Clios, and the London International Awards. Creative awards are not necessarily an indication of business success, but in this case they generate profile for the Festival among the creative/filmmaking community.

Showing Cause and Effect between Advertising and Results

In the case of the Worldwide Short Film Festival, it is easy to isolate the business results to the effectiveness and quality of the advertising, despite the fact that budgets obviously do not allow for formal research and tracking.

- The campaigns are the only promotional effort aimed at the public. Consequently, here is no other effort that can lay claim to causing the results. (The Festival uses PR, but it is aimed at the entertainment press.)
- Increased submissions trace to the momentum of increased attendance, and our efforts to promote directly to filmmakers at other festivals.
- There is also undoubtedly some word-of-mouth at work—but it's fair to say that this is a result of the increased attendance, and not a cause. **Crossover Note 5.**

Additionally, the television advertising runs as Public Service Announcements. When deciding what PSA to air, TV stations often base their choice on the appeal of the creative. The campaigns for the Festival have received \$3,000,000 of PSA airtime, which is a very large figure considering the short window in which the ads run, and the fact that they often only run in Toronto. Appealing creative means more airtime. More airtime means more awareness. And more awareness means more audience.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2004

[Short Film Festival Version]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 30 pages.

We used to attach the full set to each case, but to save a few trees, we are now customizing each attachment. It can still be quite long, but not 30 pages.

The idea of Crossover Notes occurred to me while I was editing Cassies 1997.

I was a consultant by then. But before that I had clambered up to the group product manager level at P&G, and been President and Vice Chairman at O&M—both in Toronto. These companies were passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. It’s hard to believe now, but we felt rushed off our feet even then. Compared to today, though, we had time to study if campaigns were working or not, and come to conclusions about why.

There are lessons, like gold dust, in all the Cassies cases. So in 1997 I decided to extract them. This started with bite-sized footnotes about lessons that “cross over” from one case to another. And the idea kept growing. It is still anchored to the winning cases, but I also draw on other thinking for more complex issues.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn’t start out as a crash course in advertising, they are worth reading as a whole. You can also dip into them selectively. The headings on the next page will help you choose.

I’ve tried to be even-handed on controversial issues, but here and there you will sense my point of view. For this I thank the Cassies for not editing their Editor.

We now have over 120 published cases. They’re an immense and growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of this on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: November 2004.

For comprehensive advice on brand-building, see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—authored by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum.

It is published by the ICA. See www.ica.adbeast.com.

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The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and are attached. Some of these refer to others—marked (✓) and also attached. This then starts a chain reaction—because some of the (✓) Notes *themselves* refer to others—but we decided to stop at this point. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section of www.cassies.ca

SHORT FILM FESTIVAL. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2004.

1. **What a Brand Stands For.** People in real life hardly give the deeper meaning of brands a second thought. They know that some appeal more than others. They may have a sense that brands jostle for their attention. But that's about it. They certainly don't agonize over what is the *essence* of this, or the *abiding truth* of that.

But branding goes deeper than we in marketing may realize. Before marketing was even thought of, branding was part of life. Everything from national flags, to coinage, to the uniforms on soldiers, boy scouts and Supreme Court judges, to the plumage on peacocks (human and otherwise), is a form of branding. Business had an early example in the 1800s when Harley Procter of P&G heard a pastor quote a biblical text about ivory palaces. Goodbye Procter & Gamble White Soap. Hello Ivory. More recently, Tom Peters published *A Brand Called You*. And Tony Blair tried to re-brand the UK as "Cool Britannia."

A brand, in the fullest sense, is hard to define. Dictionary definitions tend to focus on the trademark aspect, and yes, branding does involve some sort of identifying mark. But this misses the point. What makes a brand *valuable*?

The answer is The Advantage of Belief.¹ Charles Revson of Revlon famously said, "In the factory we make cosmetics. In the store we sell hope." In other words, a brand is not a product; it's what people *believe* about a product. These beliefs can be immensely powerful. The most astonishing is the placebo effect. In clinical trials, many patients respond to the "sugar pill," even when they have serious diseases. We see the same thing with blind and identified product tests. With a strong brand, the preference jumps. (See *What's in a Name* by John Philip Jones.) And when the Advantage of Belief takes hold, it leads to a long list of benefits:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| a) Customer loyalty | e) Facilitating brand extensions |
| b) Higher price | f) Withstanding competitive attack |
| c) Higher cash flows | g) Motivating staff and attracting new talent |
| d) Higher long-term profitability | h) Potentially augmenting the stock price |

This doesn't, of course, answer the question, "how do you build these beliefs?" There are widely varying notions, but most agree on the basic principles: (1) stake out what the brand can and should stand for (2) stick with this over time (3) evolve to account for lessons learned and market changes.²

This can't be done by empty promises. We have to assess what consumers want against what the product delivers—and tell the story better than competitors do. We have a melting pot of perceptions and reality to work with. All the "brand" ideas are there to help—Brand Image, Equity, Personality, Character, Essence, Relationship, Footprint, Truth, Soul, Identity, and so on—along with old faithfuls like Positioning, Focus of Sale, USP, Features, Attributes, Benefits and Values. Whatever the terminology, though, "what the brand stands for" is critical.

¹ This is a phrase of mine, though the idea that a brand is "more" has been described by many authors.

² How do you do this, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication* : www.ica.adbeast.com

- 4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.** This goes deeper than the "Ps" of Marketing. Product, Pricing, Packaging, Promotion, and Place must all support the Positioning. But some companies allow their concept of "the brand" to dictate business strategy as a whole. Clearnet and i-wireless are examples in Cassies 2001. Family Channel and Gaz Metro are others from 2004. From the broader business world, Virgin is often cited as an example. So is Lou Gerstner's turnaround of IBM. Apple used to be a poster child, and perhaps will be again. People blow hot and cold on Nike, which makes Scott Bedbury's book *A New Brand World* a fascinating read.
- 5. The Total Brand Experience.** Brands have always been built at "every point of contact" with the consumer, but as a turn of phrase, it's a relatively new thought. It arrived partly because of multiple media choices, and partly with the growth of services (as opposed to products.) Your treatment by a retailer or telco or airline has more effect than fleeting exposure to a beautifully crafted advertisement—and if the experiences are dissonant, then something is wrong.

Cassies cases have historically been about advertising, but they are evolving to include the idea of "every point of contact." At its highest level (*Crossover Note 4*) this is much more than communication, but most of the time now it comes under the heading of Integrated Marketing Communication. This is more profound than making sure all effort has the same "look and feel." In fact, that notion is simplistic, for the obvious fact that the techniques of one discipline don't necessarily work in another.

One of the agencies uses what it calls the "organizing idea." This is analogous to "what the brand stands for." All the communication/ promotional disciplines therefore have the same focal point, but they work to achieve their goals in the way that works best in their medium. Of course, if there are certain words, pictures, icons, slogans etc. that work in more than one medium, they will be used. The point is never to force fit. Over the years, various cases have referred to the total brand experience. This includes the following:

Cassies III: Richmond Savings. Cassies 99: AGF Funds. Cassies 2001: Clarica, Clearnet, i-wireless. Cassies 2002: Bank of Montreal, ED, Lipton Sidekicks, Scotiabank, Sloche. Cassies 2003: Bubba, Dodge SX 2.0, Irving Mainway's Coffee, Manitoba Telecom, MINI, United Way, Université de Montréal. Cassies 2004: Cirque du Soleil (Zumanity), Desjardins. Family Channel, Gaz Metro, Réno Dépôt.

- 11. The Eureka Insight.** These feature in many cases. Some examples:
- Oh Henry! None of the gut-fillers had tried to own hunger, even though it was the high ground for the category. Cassies II. See also *Crossover Note 7*.
 - Buckley's. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
 - Chrysler. Minivans were "my most expensive household appliance." Even so, *emotion* was the key to an immensely successful launch. Cassies III.
 - Philadelphia Cream Cheese. In research, people often do not own up to what they really want, which in this case was "permission to indulge." Cassies III.
 - Richmond Savings. Almost everyone hated banks, but it still took insight to turn this into the "Humungous Bank." Cassies III.

11. The Eureka Insight (cont'd).

- Eggs are natural, but in word-association tests, consumers did not say so. (See [12. Changing the Goalposts](#) next.) The former campaign brought “natural” to life.
- Sunlight. Getting dirty is fun. This is diametrically opposed to the conventional wisdom, dominated by Tide, that clean is good and dirt is bad. Cassies 99.
- Fido in Cassies 99. Competitors were fighting on promotion/price. In an echo of Apple vs. IBM, Fido saw that consumers needed the human touch. See also Clearnet and “the future is friendly” in Cassies 2001.
- Diet Pepsi found a way to be youthful without being too young in the “forever young” campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002: healthy gums, after a century talking about bad breath.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002: Appealed to non-experts with “Anyone can win.”
- Aero. Saw the power of “melting” in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond. Used the fact that men hate to paint in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignored the political correctness of being tasteful. Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle. Talked to women as women, not as “family.” Cassies 2004.
- Quebec Milk. Saw the blindingly obvious. That just asking people to drink more milk might cause it. Cassies 2004.
- Toyota Sienna. Realized that the answer lay not in what minivan buyers do, but in what SUV buyers do. Cassies 2004.
- Virtually all the cases in [Crossover Note 10](#).

12. Changing the Goalposts. Some insights come from suddenly seeing what was always there to be seen. (Sunlight’s Cassies 99 joy of getting dirty would be an example.) Others re-frame the problem, such as:

- Cow Brand Baking Soda’s extended usage.
- Johnson’s Baby Shampoo’s adult re-positioning.
- Cereals trying to get eaten as a late night snack.

Insights can also spring from what is *not* being said. The Eggs case in Cassies 99 is an example. Word-association tests played back any number of benefits, but did *not* identify that eggs are natural. Somehow, this omission caught the agency’s eye, and they turned “natural” into a powerful campaign using real farmers. This turned around a 17-year decline.

Purina is another example. At one time, everyone sold dog-food on taste and nutrition. Not surprisingly, consumers played back that these were important, reinforcing the conventional wisdom. Suddenly, the team at Scali/Purina saw the significance of the unspoken (and deeper) truth—that a dog is part of the family. This led to the immensely effective “helping dogs lead longer lives” campaign.

Purina also points up another way to get insights—by looking beyond Canada. Similar thinking had produced the famous “prolongs active life” campaign for PAL dogfood in the UK.

14. Refreshing a continuing campaign. When I was at P&G, and later at O&M, all the big advertisers and their agencies thought in terms of campaigns. If we were developing new advertising, the comment “that’s just a one-off” was a kiss of death.

In those days, a campaign was usually defined by what a brand did on television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, and they would be refreshed over time. Nowadays, influenced by the ideas of “media neutrality” and “every point of contact,” a campaign is more complicated. But it’s fair to say that we (clients and agencies) still believe that campaigns are the right/best way to build a brand.³

The belief in campaigns evolved intuitively. But more recently, the idea of “the brand relationship” has taken hold. This is the notion that (in a way) we treat brands like friends. Brand Truths can come out of this type of thinking, as can other insights. I know of one researcher who says, “I want to know what you think of the brand, but I also want to know what the brand thinks of you.”

Relationships themselves can be very different, but for most people, they are based on things like trust and consistency, without being boring or predictable. This has led to the idea that brands should present a consistent face over time (assuming, of course, that they are standing for the right thing in the first place.)

So the intuitive belief is in line with the “relationship” view. There is still the question, though, of what is a campaign? At one time, packaged goods advertisers (and some agencies) believed in strict pool-outs. But campaigns do not have to be this tightly formatted. The following list starts at the most rigid and extends to the most holistic. All the examples have successes and failures, and the list is not a comprehensive one because some campaigns don’t lend themselves to being categorized. It will give an idea of the possibilities, however and (I hope) free up what can be rigid thinking:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like “Who wants Gum? I do. I do.” A similar situation is pooled out time after time, in a repeated format, often with a USP demo or slogan. Some people think this type of advertising is passé. Others remember it fondly, and wonder what happened to the way it used to be.
- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out.** Some think pool outs are dull, boring, predictable and clichéd. Not necessarily. The 20-odd year campaign for Hamlet cigars in the UK is rigidly formatted, but is spectacularly creative and effective.
- **Situational Pool-Out.** These don’t have the format of the strict pool out but still have a clear connection between executions. Diet Pepsi’s “forever young” and Pro•Line’s “anyone can win” are examples. So are Fido (dogs) and Clearnet/ Telus (flora and fauna). Huggies “Happy Baby” is one of the longest-running.

This category includes spectacular executions like “Manhattan Landing” and “Face” for British Airways, though it can be hard to keep coming up with ideas this big. Kit Kat is a different example, where the idea of “break” continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

³ A 30-something creative friend said to me, “where does this belief in campaigns come from? Young people today want constant change. What’s so wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been seen as heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it’s food for thought.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). As I write this Michelin is trying to make more of the Michelin Man. Some see icons as a yesterday idea, but I think that's a mis-call—it depends how it's done. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it's brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective, and could become an icon (the creative is in the case history section at www.cassies.ca)
- **Spokes-people, and Spokes-animals.** Dave Thomas and Colonel Sanders, god rest their souls, are examples, as is Morty the Bison for Manitoba Telecom.
- **Storytelling with continuing character(s).** The Oxo family in the UK is one of the longest-running examples. Bartles and Jaymes was a wonderful success story in the US. Personalities have been very successful in Quebec e.g. the Pepsi and Listerine Grand Prix winners in Cassies I and II.
- **Music-Based.** Music sometimes goes beyond a supporting role, and becomes part of the brand character. Soft Drinks, Cars, Fast Food, and Beer have all built campaigns this way. In packaged goods, becel's "young at heart" campaign would be an example.
- **Consistent "Voice and Attitude."** These campaigns are held together by something more subtle than anthems, slogans, structure, and icons. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were very different (some serious, some comical, some ironic, some dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example. As I write this, I'm remembering some Fedex ads that would fit this category ("I have an MBA" and "You're a heck of a man doing a heck of a job, Lewis.")
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign at all, because individual executions are totally different. But the overall effect can be very powerful.

The best Cassies example is the 4-year Dove case, which has been used to illustrate a number of points in these notes. The campaign started in late 91 with "Litmus," a scrupulously simple demonstration, with a haunting music track, no voice over, no people, and the story in supers. Then came the exact opposite: a raucous candid-camera commercial of women in a focus group doing the litmus test for themselves. Then another shift—to a talking-head message from the scientist who invented Dove. Finally, back to another demonstration—this one like "Litmus" in tonality, repeating the haunting music.

Someone with a strict pool-out mental model What held the campaign together was a continuing promise (mildness), an element of surprise, and a straightforward & honest brand character. The format varied completely, with no continuing slogans or visual icons.

Note: It is usually not a good idea to pre-set the type of campaign you need. Best practice is (1) define the issue (2) create the best solution (3) let the type of campaign fall out of this.

It's an open question whether today's obsessively short-term attitude is causing us to lose the drive we once had for creating great campaigns. I hope it isn't.

17. Turning a liability into a strength. Some examples:

- Buckley's—Tastes awful but it works. Cassies III.
- Irving Home Furnaces—Made a virtue of age. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine—Was seen as “Margaret Thatcher” and displaced this image with the Action Hero campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Pine-Sol—Seen as far too strong. Softened this with the ‘thorough clean’ campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Sleeman in Quebec—Took an Anglo-heritage beer in a declining category and re-vitalized it with the “honest frenglish” campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Pro•Line—Made the un-knowledgeable sports fan realize that anyone can win. Cassies 2002 and 2003.
- Crown Diamond—Appealed to men who hate painting. Cassies 2003.
- Super 7—Made a virtue of excess. Cassies 2003.
- Cirque du Soleil—“showed eroticism without really showing it.” Cassies 2004
- Gaz Metro—They made the (feared) gas flame the hero. Cassies 2004.
- Short Film Festival. Made a virtue of brevity. Cassies 2004.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo—a blind test loser against adult shampoos. Even so, they used their mildness heritage to reposition against adults washing their hair every day, and took over as market leader.
- Heinz ketchup—Making a virtue of s-l-o-w.

18. Keeping it Simple. We know that complicated things go over our heads. But when it comes time to approve a creative strategy there's an urge to cram things in. This has to be resisted. Procter & Gamble called it “the pain of leaving things out.”

Scott Bedbury (“the client” at Nike and Starbucks) blames clients for wanting too much in. Given what's at stake, it's easy to see why a client doesn't want to leave things out. But Bedbury has a point. It's hard for an agency to say no when the client says, “why not leave it in.”

There's a sub-set of this when a brand has an emotional benefit *and* a rational claim. Examples would be (1) Philly in Cassies III with “permission to indulge” and “60% less fat.” (2) Scotiabank in Cassies 2002, selling individual services and creating an overall image (3) Campbell's Soup in Cassies 2002, wanting to modernize its image, and get nutrition facts across. Something has to give i.e. the more points you want to make, the lower the impact of each. Agencies may try to point this out, or may stay silent. This is where experienced research companies can help. They have evidence-based answers as to the trade-offs involved.

The points so far have been at the strategic level, but the execution should also be simple—or, said better, *simple for the audience to take in*.⁴ Here, we have to watch for the fact that we know what we are trying to say, and so an ad may not be as simple or clear as we think it is. A director can also complicate or simplify a commercial in ways that evolve after a script is approved.

Overall, though, it's noticeable that virtually all Cassies advertising is simple.

⁴ This is an “eye of the beholder” issue. My kids have no problem processing ads that I find very busy. They don't “get” some ads that I understand perfectly—and so on.

26. Awareness Alone. It seems self-evident that awareness is important, and many Cassies cases refer to increases in brand or ad awareness (unaided, top of mind, aided etc.) Awareness needs to be kept in perspective, however. Bud Light had high awareness but a miniscule share. Nautilus had high awareness, but business was suffering. Familiprix, Pro•Line and Viagra all said that awareness was not the issue. The old cliché, “I don’t care what they say as long as they get my name right” is too simplistic.

Strong brands are based on *relevant differentiation*. Of course, you must imprint what the brand stands for—and “awareness” shows you are doing that. But relevant awareness is what counts. Young & Rubicam has conducted an enormous and ongoing study of this, called the Brand Asset Valuator. It has a worldwide database with hundreds of brands in it. The key findings are in the public domain. For example, they’ve found that brands are a combination of Relevance & Differentiation on the one hand, and Knowledge & Esteem on the other (awareness is part of Knowledge & Esteem). Very important, though, Relevance & Differentiation are more important than Knowledge & Esteem. This shows up with new and growing brands, and with old and declining ones. With new brands, Relevance & Differentiation “lead” Awareness and Esteem. With old but declining brands, it turns out that they often retain Knowledge and Esteem. It is the loss of Relevant Differentiation that causes the decline. In other words, a brand can have high awareness, but still be in trouble. This is why awareness alone is not enough.⁵

33. Changing the Target Audience. Many brands aim at the same target for years. It’s not necessarily wrong, though it’s always worth zero-basing conventional wisdom.

From time to time, a brand keeps the same target, but someone sees a new way to think about them. This is fertile ground for insights—see *Crossover Notes 11 and 12*.

Occasionally, the target is radically changed. The most famous is probably Marlboro. Marlboro was originally positioned against women, complete with red filter tip so that lipstick didn’t show. I have an extraordinary B&W commercial, featuring a night-club vamp, fluttering her false eyelashes and crooning, “wouldn’t a Marlboro be good right now....” The Leo Burnett people changed all that with the Marlboro cowboy. This type of shift looks easy with hindsight, but when the decision has to be made in real time, it can be tough. There’s usually a fair amount of angst about losing current users, leading to the sort of creative brief that says “appeal to X without alienating Y.”

I recall two spectacular IPA examples where, to get maximum impact on the new target, they were prepared to alienate the previous one. The brands were Batchelor’s SuperNoodles and Peperami meat snacks (chewy, spicy sausagey things that look a bit like liquorice sticks). The advertising for each brand had been aimed at Moms for years. They decided to aim at young men, a smaller group, but heavy users. Batchelors came up with hilariously unseemly ads in the “men behaving badly” school. Peperami came up with a riotously sadistic cartoon campaign—bringing Peperami sticks came to life, and subjecting them to dreadful indignities. These couldn’t be further from “Mom” advertising, but in both cases the business took off.

⁵ This will vary by category and brand, of course. But even in high impulse categories (I worked for some time on confectionery brands) pure awareness, if it was not relevant awareness, did not seem to be enough.

That's not to say we should always crash around in the china shop, wilfully alienating longstanding audiences. But there may be less risk than we think.

Cassies winners who switched targets, and successfully took the risk of alienation, include the CFL and 5 Alive in Cassies 2002, and Family Channel in Cassies 2004. I think that Pizza Pops—the campaign with the filling splatting all over the place—is also in this camp.⁶

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Throughout my career the unspoken assumption is that advertising has to help make things *grow*—brands, businesses or both. And what could be wrong with that?

But the engines on an airliner not only help it climb, they save it from falling out of the sky. There is inescapable evidence that if a brand is unsupported, it may glide for a while, but eventually it will fall. Or, to use another analogy, a successful brand is like a goose laying golden eggs. If it didn't lay as many eggs as you wanted it to, would you starve it? I don't think so. But that is what we seem to do with brands.

David Rutherford

⁶ Not a Cassies case, but I've been told anecdotally that it was very effective.